

Exhibit 179

Exhibit 128

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Twitter bans Michael Flynn, Sidney Powell in QAnon account purge

Flynn and Powell both met with Trump at the White House in recent weeks as part of efforts to overturn the election results.



Michael Flynn, then national security adviser, at the daily news briefing at the White House on Feb. 1, 2017. Carolyn Kaster / AP file

Jan. 8, 2021, 9:28 PM UTC

By Ben Collins and Brandy Zadrozny

Twitter on Friday removed the accounts of Michael Flynn, Sidney Powell and other high-profile supporters of President Donald Trump who promoted the QAnon conspiracy theory.

The permanent bans are among the highest profile that the company has instituted as part of its efforts to crack down on misinformation and calls for violence.

Flynn and Powell both met with Trump at the White House in recent weeks as part of efforts to overturn the presidential election results. They are also high-profile figures in the QAnon community, and Flynn even [took an "oath" to the conspiracy theory](#) last year.

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weeks as part of efforts to overturn the presidential election results. They are also high-profile figures in the QAnon community, and Flynn even [took an "oath" to the conspiracy theory](#) last year.

"The accounts have been suspended in line with our policy on Coordinated Harmful Activity," a Twitter spokesperson told NBC News. "We've been clear that we will take strong enforcement action on behavior that has the potential to lead to offline harm, and given the renewed potential for violence surrounding this type of behavior in the coming days, we will permanently suspend accounts that are solely dedicated to sharing QAnon content."



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Twitter also removed the account of Ron Watkins, the administrator of the website 8kun, which was formerly named 8chan and hosts posts from Q, the false digital "prophet" at the heart of the QAnon conspiracy theory.

8chan changed its name last summer after white supremacists used the site to post manifestos before committing mass murder, including a terror attack at a mall in El Paso, Texas, that killed 17 in 2019.

Watkins, who lives in Japan, and Powell have spent recent weeks pushing false claims about Dominion Voting Systems and the company's role in the U.S. elections, as well as targeting private citizens with false claims of election fraud. Powell was sued by Dominion Voting Systems on Friday for \$1.3 billion.

The bans come two days after [Twitter locked down Trump's account](#) and warned that he risks a permanent ban if he continues to violate the company's policies. Trump posted a video in response to the mob that stormed the Capitol in which he continued to spread false claims about the election. His account is no longer locked.

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Twitter, which for years [resisted calls to moderate its platform](#), has recently taken a stronger stance against conspiracy theories that have been tied to violence, most notably the QAnon movement. In July, [Twitter removed 7,000 accounts](#) and limited many others for dabbling in QAnon. The company also designated the QAnon movement as coordinated harmful activity, meaning it was then limited from the platform's search functions and "Trending Topics"

July, [Twitter removed 7,000 accounts](#) and limited many others for dabbling in QAnon. The company also designated the QAnon movement as coordinated harmful activity, meaning it was then limited from the platform's search functions and "Trending Topics" feature.

The bans add to complaints from conservatives who have claimed that Twitter's policies and enforcement unfairly target them. Some users say they have left the platform for similar alternatives, such as Parler, which [surged during the election](#) when Twitter was aggressive in limiting misinformation.

But they also come as many people in the technology industry who have been reticent to permanently ban many accounts have [changed their positions](#) following the violence at the Capitol.

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Ben Collins

Ben Collins covers disinformation, extremism and the internet for NBC News.



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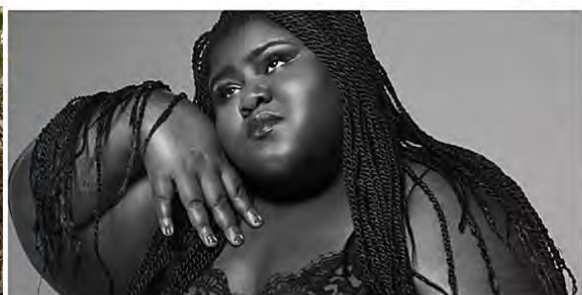
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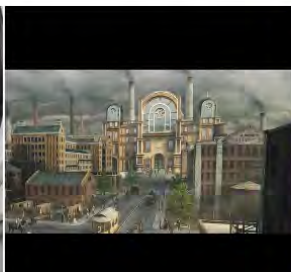
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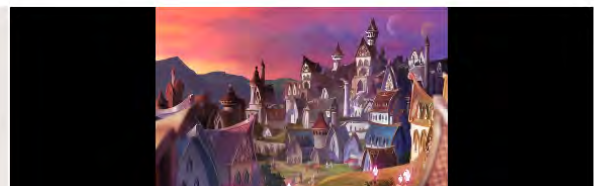
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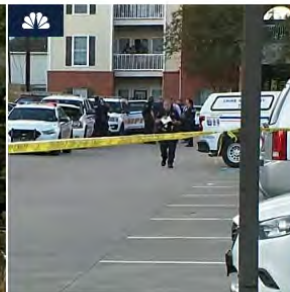
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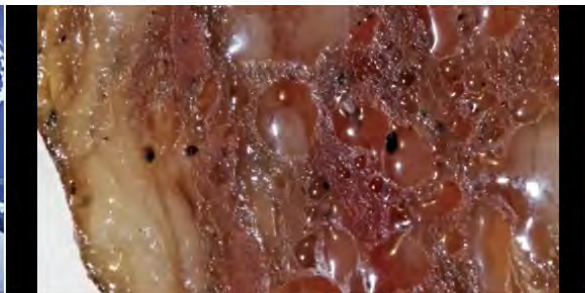
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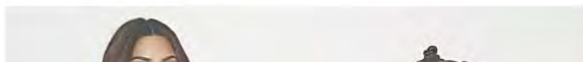
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